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Pennsylvania", "The Signing", "The Effect of the Declaration and what was thought of it", "The Fireworks of 1776", "The First Anniversary in Philadelphia", and "The Declaration on Parchment, since 1776." No attempt to give a detailed analysis can here be made. A great mass of materials has been critically examined; the text is enriched by many documents reproduced in facsimile; and there is an appendix (pp. 295-359) comprising, besides other illustrations, a parallel reprint of seven different drafts of the Declaration.

Mr. Hazelton has performed creditably a hard task, for which all students of the period will be grateful.

GEORGE ELLIOTT HOWARD.

*Life and Letters of Samuel Holden Parsons, Major General in the Continental Army and Chief Judge of the Northwestern Territory, 1737-1789.* By CHARLES S. HALL. (Binghamton, N. Y.: Otseningo Publishing Company. 1905. Pp. xiii, 601.)

THE subject of this biography played a not inconspicuous part in American history. He was a member of the Connecticut General Assembly for twelve years, 1762-1774, a brigadier-general in the Revolutionary army, and from October, 1780, a major-general, a director of the Ohio Company, and a judge of the Northwest Territory. Senator Hoar described him as a "soldier, scholar, judge, one of the strongest arms on which Washington leaned, who first suggested the Continental Congress, from the story of whose life could almost be written the history of the Northern War" (p. 587). This declaration that he was the first to suggest a Congress of the colonies, a declaration repeated in this volume, is based on the fact that in March, 1773, he wrote to Samuel Adams proposing "to revive an institution which had formerly a very salutary effect—I mean *an annual meeting of commissioners from the colonies to consult on their general welfare*" (p. 21). This certainly was an early proposal and may have been the first, but a declaration of its undoubted priority one might well hesitate to make. In the noted debate with Hutchinson in January of this year, the Massachusetts House, presumably under the influence of Adams, said that to draw a "line of distinction between the supreme authority of Parliament, and the total independence of the colonies . . . would be an arduous undertaking, and of very great importance to all the other colonies; and therefore, could we conceive of such a line, we should be unwilling to propose it, without their consent in Congress" (*Writings of Samuel Adams*, II. 425). Any one familiar with the ways of the far-seeing Adams would be willing to conjecture that he had already in mind the meeting of delegates from all the colonies.

Parsons had important duties in the North during the Revolution. In connection with his work significant suspicions have arisen. On the publication of the secret journal<sup>1</sup> of Sir Henry Clinton, evidence ap-

<sup>1</sup> *Magazine of American History*, X., XI., XII., October, 1883, to August, 1884, in eleven monthly instalments.

peared that a man by the name of William Heron, a Connecticut man, was in the employ of Clinton and in consultation with Parsons, or was pretending to be, seeking to bring about Parsons's adherence to the British cause. There is even some evidence that Parsons went further than merely to listen to the proposals. On the basis of these disclosures, charges of treason have been made against him. Winsor for example says: "It is only within a few years . . . that it has been known that Gen. S. H. Parsons, of Connecticut, was at this time acting as a spy for the British general" (*Narrative and Critical History*, VI. 460, note 5; but cf. *ibid.*, VII. 189, note). The author of the volume before us naturally addresses himself to the question of Parsons's loyalty. The nature of the proof cannot be discussed within the limits of this review. Despite the warmth with which Parsons's cause is championed, it can hardly be said that the defense is unsound. Certainly the amount of evidence against the respondent would not justify conviction. Possibly we may still have some lingering suspicion that Parsons went further than uprightness and good judgment allowed, but we are not entitled to more than the vaguest surmise, for the weight of evidence and argument seems to be strongly in favor of Parsons. We have no assurance that Heron himself was not deceiving Clinton, and in fact it seems likely either that, while pretending to be a British spy, he was really devoted to the American cause or was simply trying to get money from the British general.

The author makes no reference to the fact that while Parsons was judge of the Northwest Territory, a correspondent of Lord Dorchester's, who seems to have been an emissary to the western settlements, wrote that he had received "advances" from Parsons (Brymner, *Report on Canadian Archives*, 1890, p. 100). Winsor thinks that this is an indication of that "spirit which the secret service books of Sir Henry Clinton have fastened, justly or unjustly, upon a soldier of the Revolution" (*The Westward Movement*, 367). These advances appear on their face to have been concerning commercial relations between the New West and Canada, and one must confess that it was under cover of commercial transactions that compromising intrigues were likely to be conducted. Wilkinson was engaged in very murky "commercial" relations with Spain about the same time, and it is interesting to note that Wilkinson wrote Miró that "The two federal judges and the officials to the northwest of the Ohio, who are in charge of the settlements along the rivers Muskingum and Miami, are suitable persons for the object first named, but as each of these gets a salary of a thousand dollars a year, I should judge two thousand dollars necessary in order to alienate them from the United States" (*AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*, IX. 766). It is not impossible that we must include Parsons in the list of Western intriguers, whose minds were preyed upon by hopes of Western independence, or visions of commercial profit, or gleams of Spanish gold, or suggestions of British gratitude.

But in fact the evidence so far brought to light is not enough to

blacken the memory of any man. Wilkinson's cynical suggestion, which was quite worthy of him, is not much weaker as evidence of Parsons's approachable venality than the statement of the British correspondent above referred to. "There is a General Parsons concerned in the same enterprise", wrote this agent from Detroit, "from whom I have received advances, that I imagine may prove favourable towards a harmonious understanding in point of Commercial interest between Great Britain and these rising settlements. In fact the joint advantage of all parties who mean to be resident upon the Ohio, and to enhance the value of their landed property must induce them to insist upon a free entrance into the Bay of Mexico, and to solicit our trade." This is all that has so far been printed, so far as I know. Must such evidences be taken seriously as an indication of dishonor?

The author has apparently given much labor to the preparation of this volume. But why he could not have taken the trouble to supply it with the necessary accompaniments of a really valuable work is hard to understand. Had it been written for the general reader or so that any one would be tempted to read it, then there would have been some excuse for the method or absence of it. No one, however, that is not seeking thirstily for dry literature is likely to read the book, and it must therefore be judged as intended for reference and the use of scholars. If so, why are all the paraphernalia that the scholar demands left out of the book? Is it not trying to see so much labor expended in the production of a book without foot-notes, without proper indication of the whereabouts of the originals of the letters, with some letters printed in full and others only in part, in a bewildering sort of a way? It would not have required much trouble to make the book in these respects right. When will the industrious learn the elements of the gentle art of book-making? And yet the author's conscientious efforts have brought together a good deal of valuable material for which we must be thankful, and the book is likely to be of use.

A. C. McLAUGHLIN.

*The American Nation: a History.* Edited by ALBERT BUSHNELL HART. Volume 10. *The Confederation and the Constitution.* By ANDREW CUNNINGHAM McLAUGHLIN, A.M., Director of the Bureau of Historical Research, Carnegie Institution. (New York and London: Harper and Brothers. 1905. Pp. xix, 348.)

THE opinion that the Federal Constitution was wrung from a reluctant people by grinding necessity—a view approved, for example, by Von Holst, and seeking popular sanction in Fiske's *Critical Period*, must finally yield to a truer interpretation of the events through which the forces which formed the "more perfect union" were mobilized. Professor McLaughlin has made a distinct contribution to this ampler and truer knowledge of the real nature and scope of the necessity which urged the American people "deliberately and peaceably, without fraud